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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 003415

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2015

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SUBJECT: MAGEN DAVID ADOM DEMARCHE IN RESPONSE TO SWISS CIRCULAR NOTE FOR THIRD ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL

REF: STATE 104272

Classified By: POLCOUNSELOR John Kunstadter for reasons: E.O. 12958 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) We delivered reftel demarche to Turkish MFA Head of International Political Organizations Levent Sahinkaya, who already had in his possession copies of the Swiss Circular Note, the Draft Rules of Procedure and the Draft Third Additional Protocol. Sahinkaya confirmed:

-- the Turkish Ambassador in Geneva, representing Turkey as the OIC President, advised Ambassador Pfirter that the time was not appropriate to convene a conference; and

-- the Israeli Ambassador to Ankara Pinhas Avivi presented an identical demarche on June 8 to MFA Undersecretary Ali Tuygan (Sahinkaya did not tell us Ambassador Tuygan's response to Ambassador Avivi).

¶2. (U) Sahinkaya, however, clarified Turkey's position related to Magen David Adom, noting that Turkey is not against the Third Protocol and considers the use of a neutral emblem as "reasonable."

¶3. (C) Defending Turkey's position as OIC President, Sahinkaya insisted that Turkey could not go against the prevailing wishes of the OIC, which he distinguished as different from the Arab countries. Nevertheless, a visibly uncomfortable Sahinkaya said that the prevailing Arab opinion was against such a conference. Sahinkaya was unable to reconcile Turkey's self-description as a secular country with its OIC-influenced decision to not support a Third Additional Protocol conference in October.

EDELMAN